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Admiral Stansfield Turner
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ADMIRAL STANSFIELD TURNER: I won't disclose how much I was able to extort from your Director not to tell any stories about him at Amherst College.

I'd primarily like to respond to your questions, but let me describe to you four reasons I believe our intelligence community in this country is in a very important but profound state of change today. And the impact of these changes in the years ahead is going to be very significant for our security and our country. And I think there are four factors that are driving this profound change that is going on.

The first is a changing American perception of its role on the international scene. Second is a much greater interest and attention by the American public since the investigations of intelligence into intelligence activities. The third are the burgeoning technical capabilities that our sophisticated industrial techniques in this country have given to us in the intelligence community to go out and collect information. And the fourth is the impact of detente on the intelligence process.

Let me very briefly describe the impact of the changes each of these four factors has led to.

As far as our national perception of its role in the world, I perceive us in a transition today from a very activist, interventionist mode of foreign policy to one in which we are recognizing much more the limits, the restraints on our ability to intervene and influence events in foreign countries. I wouldn't want to in any sense say that we're going back to isolationism or total retrenchment, because clearly the United States' role in the world is very important and is going to remain so. And, in fact, I am encouraged in recent weeks and months to see what I believe is a sign that this country is gradually outgrowing its post-Vietnam aversion to intervention overseas.

But the circumstances today are such, I believe, that we must gauge much more carefully than heretofore when intervention is either desirable or feasible.

Look, for instance, at the difficulty today in deciding whom we're for and whom we're against, if we're going to meddle in other people's business. In years past we simply reacted instinctively. If the Russians were against somebody, we were in favor of them.

Look at some of the choices we had in the United States in 1978. Right now, at this time, just a year ago, there was a war in the Ogaden of Ethiopia. The Russians were against Somalia. Somalia was governed by a Marxist dictator

who was the aggressor in that war. Tough choice for us.

The year ended up with another war going on in Cambodia. The Russians were against the Cambodians and were supporting the Vietnamese. Who were the Cambodians? Pol Pot, the most repressive regime, probably, since Hitler. Tough choice for us.

I'm saying that communism is not monolithic anymore, and it's more difficult for us to pick out the white hats from the black hats than it used to be.

On top of that, it's not so clear today to our people that it's so critical if a country succumbs to considerable communist influence. We've looked out and we've seen Indonesia on that spot, the Sudan, Egypt, Somalia; and they've all seemed to have come back. The previous impression of the irreversibility of succumbing to communist pressures and becoming part of their orbit has been shattered. And the people of this country sometimes ask, "Is it necessary for us to intervene overseas?"

Even if we do decide that it is desirable and feasible to go to the support of some struggling nation, I think we today find more inhibitions on our abilities than we have in the past. One inhibition is the -- derives from the revolution in international communications. Today, if we make a move in the international arena, it's instantly portrayed all around the globe, and we receive either approbation or criticism. And for reasons I don't really understand, that approbation or criticism from the international community does have an inhibiting effect upon us, I think even upon the Soviets, and certainly upon other major powers on the world scene. It's curious because the people doing most of the criticizing, or approving, are generally second- or third-rate world powers. But they have got themselves into a position today, with such things as the one country, one vote in the United Nations formula, that they have exercised authority far greater than their actual power would indicate.

If we try to employ political pressure on other countries today, we are as apt to find them looking at us and saying, "Fie on you, fie on the Russians, fie on everybody. We're going to go our own course."

What a contrast between 25-30 years ago, when most of the Free World nations in a gathering like the United Nations watched for our vote, watched for our lead, and generally took their cue. Today they pride themselves on not following either us or the Soviets.

Look if we try to intervene militarily overseas today. Clearly, one of the lessons of Vietnam is that the dynamic of

the military equation today is that the pendulum is swinging towards the benefits of being on the defense. And even a small military power with a modicum of sophisticated weaponry can give a major military power a very difficult time. In short, military leverage is simply not what it used to be.

And I'm speaking now of a phenomenon that applies not only to the United States. Just look today at the complex that's going on in Southeast Asia. The Vietnamese have tried to conquer militarily the Cambodians. They have failed. The Chinese have tried, between military and political suasion, to get the Vietnamese to withdraw from Cambodia. They have failed. The Soviets, with threats and maneuverings of forces, have tried to get the Chinese to either not invade Vietnam or to pull out. And I think one, on balance, even though the Chinese are pulling out, has to say that the Soviets have failed in that.

In short, the levers of power, of influence are different today. It doesn't mean that they are not there or we cannot look forward to exercising them, because, on behalf of the Free World, this country must. I think the lesson is that they are going to have to be exercised more subtly in the future. We're going to have to look to longer-term influences rather than constantly putting our finger in the dike here or there. We must be able to anticipate events rather than to react to them. We must be able to understand the underlying forces behind the world scene, forces that can be influenced and drive over considerable periods of time rather than in some emergency.

For us in the intelligence world, this has important impacts. It means that we must expand the scope of our requirements. Thirty years ago we were concentrating almost exclusively on Soviet military intelligence. Today we can't limit ourselves to the Soviet Union or the Soviet Bloc. We have to look across the spectrum of almost the whole 150-some countries in the world. And beyond that, we can't focus unduly on the military element. We've got to get up to our hips in politic -- political, economic, food, production, energy, terrorism, narcotics, psychiatry and health of world leaders. Almost any academic discipline, almost any geographic area is something that we have got to be able to uncover these underlying trends and forces that are shaping the course of history.

For us in intelligence, this has a big impact on the way we collect information. In these political/economic spheres, we can use some of our technical intelligence from these systems I described a minute ago, and we'll talk about more in a bit. But primarily, I think, we're dependent upon good human intelligence.

And I would suggest that while always good human espionage is important here, in this area today we can use a lot of

other kinds of human intelligence, intelligence that's derived by non-intelligence agencies of the government: Treasury, Commerce, the ambassadorial sections of State, and so on, as well as American business overseas. And one of our challenges is to be able to bring all this human intelligence together with such technical as is applicable, and develop a feel for what is going on in these countries around the world.

I don't want to overdo this. We cannot slight the military equation. It's very important today because the Soviet military buildup continues. Today we have to also keep track of wars on a smaller scale. Look at the number that are going on this afternoon. There's still a Chinese-Vietnam war. There's still a Vietnamese-Cambodian war. There's still a Tanzanian-Ugandan war. There's still a North Yemen-South Yemen war. The world is full of these. Let alone, of course, Namibia, Rhodesia, Iran, and other trouble spots.

And we've got an increasing demand on us, as intelligence officers, in the arms control field to be able to tell what the Soviets, in particular, are doing in their armaments buildup.

So we must continue to concentrate on the military sphere. I think this calls for a great deal more emphasis on these technical intelligence collection systems, with humans supplementing it, but, in particular, technical systems with a timely input, so that we can tell the President whether the Chinese are really pulling out today, not tell him next week whether they pulled out yesterday. We've got to be able to stay abreast.

The challenges are very great in this new atmosphere, this new role that the United States is playing in the world. The emphasis, the impact of good intelligence can be greater than ever.

Let me move quickly to saying that it also means we have to think how we analyze these situations a little differently than we've done before. I believe when we concentrated largely on military intelligence we were interested in the facts: How many tanks, what range would they shoot, and what was the thickness of their armor was the kind of answer we were trying to produce for our military commanders.

It happens in the United States, in particular, that military commanders are less interested in what is the enemy intention: How is he going to use those tanks and why? Our military commanders take a worst-case estimate of what are the enemy capabilities, not what does he intend to do.

And as a result, I believe what happened over a period

of many years in our intelligence community is that we put a lot of emphasis on consensus intelligence: to get the DIA and the CIA and the State Department and the Army and the Air Force to agree on what the estimate should be.

Now, if you're dealing in facts, that's maybe not too bad. Because if the DIA says the airplane will fly a thousand miles and the CIA says it'll fly 2000, 1500 is probably a damn good choice in between. After all, both of them overstated their case anyway, because they knew they were going to come to a consensus.

But now when you're talking about dealing in political, economic, or even military intentions, you have another ballgame. If there's evidence over here the enemy may attack on Monday and evidence here that it may attack on Friday, I can guaranty you the wrong answer is Wednesday. If there are three reasons why the government of Country X is going to fall in the next six months and four reasons why it's going to survive, there's no way you could compromise and come to a consensus here.

But what you can do, and the essence, the importance, in political/economic intelligence is to explicate these four reasons and those three and juxtapose them so the decision-maker can understand the chemistry that's going on there and can mix that with his own understanding and with events that unfold to him tomorrow and the next day, and make good decisions.

So I believe we have to emphasize in our analysis of intelligence today two things. We must be decisive. We shouldn't try to go and get this consensus. We should pick Monday or Friday. But then we must also be sure that we display the minority, the differing views. So that if we pick Monday, we also describe what were the factors that we rejected, and why, on Friday.

So we have emphasized -- Bill Creeger can tell you, as I see him sitting here -- in our NFIB meetings time and again that we want the dissenting view -- not the dissenting comment, the dissenting view -- to be displayed in the text of the estimate. Comments that are just little footnotes down here get brushed aside. I want them juxtaposed so that you see why there's this theory and why there's that theory. And then you, the reader, the policymaker, make up your own mind. Don't expect the intelligence analyst to give you a flat prediction. If we do that, we've lost the game. Because nobody believes us. Nobody is going to take that and take action on it. They have to understand why you have the feeling that Monday is likely to be the answer.

So I think there are major changes in how we collect and how we analyze our intelligence if we're going to fit the new requirements that are in front of us.

And very quickly, a second requirement driving our change in intelligence today are these burgeoning technical capabilities. You're aware of these: our satellites for photography, our various forms of collecting signals intelligence. The capabilities these give us today almost inundate us with data. We've got a real challenge to sort it, process it, handle it, and be able to do something with it.

And yet I want to emphasize that with all this plethora of information from the signals and photographic systems, the human intelligence is perhaps more important than ever before.

Broadly speaking, the technical systems tell you something that happened someplace, some time in the past. Maybe a little comment tells you what's going to happen in the future, but you're lucky. If you want to find out why they did that or what they're going to do next, you want that human intelligence, that element that can come only from the human contact with the other side.

And so, we are, I believe, today striking that right balance and keeping the human intelligence activities in the CIA, in the FBI, in the Defense Department at the same levels they've been. For five or six years, now, they have not gone down. And they are increasingly going to be valuable in complementing and tying together what you get from these technical systems.

I think we're going to have to emphasize cover and tradecraft, because the world is getting tougher for us. We've had Agents expose our people. It's tougher to get their cover and to hold it.

We have an interesting situation derivative from the fact we're looking to more countries for more information today, and this is that our tradecraft, our ability to outwit the counterintelligence of other countries has got to be better and better.

First of all, in the Soviet Bloc, their counterintelligence is becoming more and more sophisticated. So we have to match that with our tradecraft.

But then if you look at the rest of the world, where we're more interested today than we were, in the non-communist countries, where their counterintelligence is not so good, on the other hand, the cost to the United States of not doing it right and of getting caught is much greater in a friendly country than it is in a communist country. And therefore we've got to be better at our trade than ever before, because the risks that we're taking, while in a sense not as great as they are in the Communist Bloc, where people's lives are more at

stake, and so on, but as far as our country, its reputation, its relations with the rest of the world, it's even greater today. And we must therefore be better at our trade.

And that means we're going to be less efficient. It's going to be more costly. We've got to harder in order to get the same product.

Finally, I would say it's very important in this technical collection/humint mix to be sure that we coordinate it all and bring it all together, and that we don't, for instance, task a spy to get us something we can get by satellite. But there's very few times that you can just replace a spy with a satellite, or vice versa. But what you do need to do -- and we've set up a mechanism for this in the intelligence community called the National Intelligence Tasking Center -- we've tried to organize it so that there is a center that looks and says, "For that particular problem, is it sigint, photint, or humint, or what mix of those, that will best satisfy the national needs, and at the same time not let anything drop between the cracks?"

My third point was that there's increased public attention to intelligence today. I don't think I need emphasize this to you. The erosion of confidence in us as a result of the investigations, I think, is beginning to swing back. I find, in talking around the country, that there is still a lingering suspicion that we may be invading the American privacy. We're working to overcome that. We're doing ti by being more open, speaking more in public, releasing more that we can on an unclassified basis, trying to give the public a greater sense of confidence.

But part of the result of the investigations and this lack of -- or, this lack of concern about invasion of American privacy has been the establishment of these oversight procedures, which basically, I think, are good. But as you know as well as I, they have their risks.

First of all, it makes us all very uncomfortable, particularly people who have been in the human intelligence game for a long period of time whose stock in trade is assuring an agent that they're going to be able to keep his anonymity. And with the amount of publicity, unwanted, that we get today in those areas, it's very difficult. And it is a traumatic adjustment.

On the other hand, to the extent we rebuild that confidence in the American public, we're going to be better off. To the extent that these oversight controls do insure that there are no abuses in the future, we're laying a foundation of importance.

I look forward to the charters, which are, hopefully, going to be passed by this Congress, as a means of both establishing our authority to do what we need to do, and also establishing the boundaries within which the country wants us to operate. I hope they do pass.

My fourth and last point is that detente has affected your business and ours in an important way. I believe that detente is a net loss for us in the intelligence and counter-intelligence business. I don't pass judgment, and I think, personally, it's probably a net plus for the world and for the country. But it makes your job and ours tougher.

On top of that, we have these additional restraints coming out of the abuses and the investigations of the past, which, again, makes our counterintelligence even more difficult than before. We have more targets, we have more problems, and we have more restraints on the way we can go about it.

Beyond that, while I don't know the causes and I haven't dug into the history of it, there's little doubt in my mind that the Central Intelligence Agency's counterintelligence over many years was hampered by internal dissension, internal differences of approach. I have little doubt, also -- and I've not dug into this either -- that the liaison between your bureau and our agency was hampered for reasons I don't have to go into in years past. And I would only say to you that with the heightened need for good counterintelligence today, with the greater impediments to carrying it out, we've got to be sure there is nothing but the smoothest coordination between the FBI and the CIA in the counterintelligence field.

I know that Director Webster and I are both dedicated to that. I've been very impressed and pleased by the progress that I have seen in the short time I've been here in improving and strengthening those relationships. I'm grateful to you for the role that you here in the FBI have played in that, and I pledge to you all of my personal effort and attention to continue that in the months and the years ahead.

Thank you very much.

Q: Admiral, as the President's principal adviser on foreign intelligence, how do you envision your role for the entire community?

ADMIRAL STANSFIELD TURNER: Well, I think my role as the President's chief intelligence adviser is to try to see to it that he gets the best distillate that he -- that I can give him of all the intelligence that's available within the wide range of agencies and departments that have it.

Now, that puts me in the difficult spot because I'm the guy who has to make those decisions: Is it going to be Monday? But I also then have to try not to overlook the Friday theory. In short, it won't do him much good if I give him a pabulum consensus review of what everybody says. So, a lot of weight is on my shoulders to make the right choices and to decide to what degree to highlight the minority views.

I don't have any particular theory that I've always got to say everybody's view if he disagrees. But I've also got to be very careful that I don't just play my own sense of it. Because I don't profess to be any better than anybody else at this. It's very tough judgments.

This President is super to work for in that regard. I've never been with anybody in my life who is more attentive and more absorptive. And when you go to talk with him about the state of intelligence in some countries today, you can see that he's sitting there and he's just dropped how he's going to bring Begin around or how he's going to do something else of great importance, and then he gives you just 105 percent attention for your 10 minutes on that subject, or whatever it is. It's very rewarding to have the feeling that you have that opportunity, and it's a tremendous responsibility.

I try to do my best to represent all the views I can, Bill.

Q: I would like to follow up on that. Given the fiscal restraints that we have and the fact that human resources are probably the most critical element facing the entire intelligence community today, do you envision that there will be a greater availability of human resources for the intelligence community, or does the constraints on the budget preclude that for the future?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Hard to -- hard to predict. There are lots of people on Capitol Hill today who are seeing that we need to strengthen intelligence. Whether that means we need more people or not is a difficult one.

I think I would say to you, in all candor -- not to be quoted, particularly not to be quoted before a budget committee -- that I think we've got enough people in the intelligence community. I think there's got to be some shuffling around. And I tried very hard to get more people into your counterintelligence branch here, or at least who are paid for by counterintelligence for what portion of their work they do in that field, this year. We couldn't give you everything that you wanted. But I'll be candid with you also. I think we gave you about as much as you can absorb and be sure that it's used for counterintelligence in this year. And I'm open-minded to trying to help you in the next budget cycle if -- you know, if you really show that what we've been able to give you in the '80 program is utilized well.

It seems to me, on the surface, that you are going to need more support here. I think there are probably other areas where we can find to give it to you. But if it doesn't prove to be feasible to do that, I'll look for additional resources, if we can.

Q: We'll remember those words next year.

ADMIRAL TURNER: I hedged them, though.

[Laughter]

ADMIRAL TURNER: "If we can."

Please.

Q: Admiral, from time to time in the recent years, and from time to time, occasionally, now, the matter of merging functional responsibility for external/internal responsibility under one roof comes up. How do you view that, as chief of the intelligence community?

ADMIRAL TURNER: You mean external and internal counterintelligence?

Q: Not counterintelligence, security; the external responsibility for -- external security vis-a-vis internal security. Namely, the CIA's responsibility versus the FBI's responsibility for internal security.

ADMIRAL TURNER: I must say that I haven't given a lot of thought to and haven't heard much discussion of the idea of merging those. You mean giving one of the two agencies or creating some third agency to do security, both externally and internally.

Well, I can tell you one thing: I'm violently opposed

to putting the CIA in internal security, because I just don't think the climate of this country would take it, in view of what I've talked about before, of the abuses, most of which, of course, were exaggerated, but some of which were real. And I think it would be very difficult on the CIA if you tried to make that move.

Conversely, it seems to me it would be terribly expensive to try to put the FBI on the whole external picture, where I've got a chief of station in most every country and a network of liaison, and so on.

So, I'd be happy to have you continue if there's an argument that I haven't considered for doing it. But those are my initial thoughts.

Q: Do you expect -- in light of your comments on human intelligence, which were heartening, do you expect that this is going to be long-term and continuing, and that we will not get back to the days of overdependence on gadgetry?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I'm not sure I would accept your thesis that there's been an overdependence on gadgets in days past. I think it's an apprehension that's easy to come by. And there's no question, for instance, in the allocation of my time in the budget process how much more time I spend on the decisions about technical system than I do about the human program. Because I've got, you know, a billion and a half dollars at stake in which satellite we buy. And once we've gone down the track just a little bit, we're so pregnant that that's the system we're going to have and it's going to be with us for eight or ten years. And it is a very difficult, particularly for non-technical people like myself, decision to absorb, debate, digest, and make up your mind on.

So I think sometimes the human intelligence representatives sort of feel neglected, because you to an NFIB meeting, for instance, and half the discussion is -- or most of the discussion is on these technical problems.

But it doesn't, in my sense, mean that I feel we have neglected the human.

In part, with me, it comes because I'm very confident that both in your agency and in the CIA the human intelligence activity is being well run, and in many sense needs to be sort of left alone, and there's too much supervision of it as is, too much external supervision in this oversight process that can lead to human intelligence by timidity because you're afraid to get exposed, you're afraid of exposure. There's too much -- there has been, in my opinion, too much supervision of it inside the CIA. And that's one of the reasons I made the personnel reduction a year and a half go out there. I thought we had

people taking in each other's laundry when it wasn't dirty. And they were just stumbling over each other. And I had a real, I thought, morale problem. Because when I had brilliant, dedicated young people who were being overmanaged, over supervised and under-challenged, I was going to have them there to become senior people in five or ten years. They were going to go off and do something else.

But I think, to answer your question a little more directly, that you can count on the emphasis on human intelligence continuing because I feel that upsurge of attitude and interest both on the Hill and in the White House, the NSC, Defense Department. I don't think there is any issue with it in the government today. So I do think it is a long-run trend to be sure we don't neglect the human in the face of all the interest and detail that has to be given to the technical.

Q: With all the oversight that's given the intelligence community today, especially activities by the CIA, with all the subcommittees and committees that are involved. do you think it's really feasible to carry out a sustained covert action without it being leaked?

I know you're somewhat concerned about this. In your past interviews you've broached this subject. But could you comment on...

ADMIRAL TURNER: The question was: Is it possible to have a sustained covert action under all this oversight and visibility we have today?

I think, if we're now talking covert action, the influencing of events in other countries, not the collection of intelligence, but the undermining of governments, the transmittal of propaganda, the financing of various projects and activities overseas, we are definitely inhibited by the oversight process.

First, we're inhibited inside the Executive Branch, because, to be candid with you, if inside the Executive Branch, as you vet a proposal for covert action, there is some element that feels that's the wrong policy. Today, I'm ashamed to say, you have to be worried that that dissident group will leak it, and then blow it.

Secondly, you have to be concerned at a leak on Capitol Hill. And I want to emphasize, I don't believe the intelligence committees of the Congress are any more vulnerable to leaks than are the normal processes in the Executive Branch. But when you have to notify eight committees of the Congress -- I guess we're down to seven, but I like to overstate the case -- and then when you consider that it may be, domestically, politically controversial, your chances of getting a covert action approved or

notified without it leaking, if there is, particularly, this domestic political element in it, is very low.

So, yes, we are, I think, definitely circumscribed today, and I'm hoping that in the charters we can get the Hughes-Ryan Act amended to the point where we only notify the two committees and they each have representation for the other six committees, so that all eight committees, you know, have access to the information when they need it, but we don't go give briefings to all eight of them, and that that may help.

When it comes to the clandestine collection of intelligence, particularly by human means, we're also inhibited today. To the extent that the case officer really can't persuade the agent that he can keep him anonymous, we've got a real handicap. And it's going to take more time, more prosecution of Snepps, hopefully Agees and others, more tightening of our own internal procedures.

And I would emphasize -- I have no judgment on the FBI, but the internal handling of classified information in the CIA has not been up to par. It clearly isn't in the Defense Department and never has been. And we've got our own house to get in order before we can just complain that it's laws and regulations and newspapers and others that are our problem.

And I'm tightening up on the code word classification system, and we'll put out a whole new system for that in a few months here that I think will help us both get more information to the analysts, but tighten up on the information about how we get it, either the human or the technical sources.

So, I'm afraid my answer to your questions is not terribly optimistic. But we've got our own work cut out, and I think we've got to start at home and improve our security, keep our secrets better, be sure we handle our classified papers properly, and nick away at this problem over a period of time, and it's going to take time.

Q: Do you see any of the competition for resources or the forces of nationalism affecting the unity of the Warsaw Pact nations? Do you see any strains there that might cause a change in the next five or ten years?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Are there possible strains over resources or other factors in the Warsaw Pact?

Yes. We have increased confidence in our CIA prediction that the Soviet Union is going to have energy constraints, oil constraints in the next four or five years. And those play into the Eastern Bloc, where they sell a million and a half, something, barrels a day right now, had planned to go up, have

already notified them that they can't go up. And when the Soviets themselves, with their bloc, are a net demand for importing -- I'm sorry -- have a net negative -- that isn't putting it very well either -- but they want to use more oil than they can produce, they're going to have to make a choice: "Do we cut back on the Eastern Europeans? Do we cut back on growth? Do we conquer Iran? Do we buy more with our hard-earned foreign currency, which deprives us of buying plant and machinery and sophisticated technology?" And so, that can play there.

The Polish economy today, in 1979, is in bad shape. They've got a problem now. How much will the Soviets help bail them out? How much will the Soviets let them go to the West for loans to bail them out in different ways?

So, there are signs of strain. And clearly, as we all even read in the newspapers, Romania is continuing to pursue a reasonably independent course of foreign policy.

I don't want to be so encouraging as to say I see this thing breaking up or fracturing. I really don't. I think it's far from that, and the Soviets have still got too much horsepower. But they may well have some real problems on their hands in the next four or five years, as you suggested.

Way in the back.

Q: Admiral, from time to time we hear from the media about the FBI's morale. And we're constantly trying to answer it. I'd like to turn that question to you. How do you see the morale at your agency today?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, I suppose that the Director is the last guy to ask about morale. Mine's good, but...

[Laughter and applause]

ADMIRAL TURNER: I keep it good because I don't even bother to read the press about myself anymore.

But seriously, I think in particular the morale in the DDO, the Operations Directorate, has really come around in the past year. No question that my release of the 820 positions, coupled with lots of other previous problems, pushed morale there pretty low.

John McMahon, who took over in that department a year ago January, has done an absolutely superb job there, and I think has just brought that thing back around.

I think the agency suffers today very much from the legacy of all these years since late 1974 of public criticism.

And I'll have to say to you that the absolutely unconscionable acts of somebody in releasing the President's critical but constructive note concerning Iran has really done more damage to morale in the agency than anything I know of in many years. Because it's one thing for our people to be pilloried for the mistakes of the past -- and they truly were not as great as portrayed and they truly were mistakes of a rather small minority of people, and most of the employees didn't know these things were going on. But it's another thing when your effectiveness, your usefulness to the country is questioned as much as it has been over this Iran failure.

And I get reports from the field: "Were out here breaking our back, taking risks to collect this information, and you guys are blowing it there in Washington by, you know, not doing it right. And, you know, what are we here for?"

And that's tough. It's tough on people.

And, yes, we didn't do exactly the best in Iran that we would like to have. But we didn't have an intelligence failure in Iran. And you know that and I know that. This is the cross of being an intelligence person.

Let me tell you, we really hit this China-Vietnam thing on the head. We hit it on the head way back, and we led the policymakers right down to it. You don't read about that in the papers, do you?

You stub your toe a little bit on Iran, and you're all over the place. Do a good one, and you get no credit.

And I'm looking for all the newspaper columnists, I'm looking for all the academic pundits. I'm looking for all the Israeli and other intelligence services who predicted this Iranian thing so clairvoyantly, and I'm trying to find in writing where they did it.

And we did lead the policymakers to understand that there was a lot of disturbance in Iran. What we didn't do is we didn't realize that a 78-year-old cleric who'd been in exile for 14 years was going to be the catalyst to bring 'em all together.

[Laughter and applause]

ADMIRAL TURNER: And finally, we, and the Shah himself, I think, believed that the Shah, when the crunch came would use that police power that he had and would keep them under control. But he didn't, or couldn't. And I think -- I know I went wrong personally on that assumption. I assumed that all these problems were there. But, by gosh, when the time came, the fist would be

down and the Shah would stay in control. But that didn't happen, and we were clearly wrong on that.

You win some and you lose some. But...

Q: Admiral, over the weekend, General Jones, the new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, in a television interview, all but admitted that the Soviets are building more ships and more planes, more guns, and just outdoing us. And I wonder if you could tell us if they're outdoing us in intelligence-gathering.

ADMIRAL TURNER: I don't think they are outdoing us in intelligence-gathering. I assess it this way: We're clearly ahead in these technical systems. We know we have systems that they don't have, and capabilities. Because our economy, our society is more sophisticated than theirs. And I think we are several jumps ahead of them there.

On the human intelligence side, you know better than I that they have a much bigger effort than we do. I think they don't need as big an effort, because we give so much away.

But I'm very proud of your human intelligence and counterintelligence effort and the Central Intelligence Agency's. And I would -- I would hazard -- make a prediction that if we could lay it all out, which we never will be able to, that the net value of our smaller human intelligence effort is just as good or better than theirs. But that's a very biased and subjective judgment. But they certainly have a big effort there.

But let's look at one last factor. None of this does you any good unless you analyze it properly, unless you bring it together. And I just won't countenance the thought that the analysts in your agency, in mine, in the Defense Department, in the State Department, who live in a free-thinking environment, where you can talk about, "Yes, it may be Friday," even if your boss says it's Monday, aren't going to do a better job of bringing it together and making productive use out of it than you can in a totalitarian society, where you lose your head if you differ, sometimes.

So, I think we're head of them in all these respects. But by gosh, if they have time to read all the stuff we give them unclassified, they sure have a leg up on not having to be as good in intelligence as we are.

Q: Putting together this -- your mentioning our gadgetry, and putting that together with Iran, what precautions, or are our precautions adequate for protecting the equipment we have in a place like Iran when we're suddenly booted out of there?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Protecting our equipment in Iran.

Now, if you ask about the F-14s and the Phoenix missiles, and so on, that's a Defense Department problem. But I'll answer it to this extent:

We made a conscious decision several years ago to sell that equipment. And we don't own it. We don't have any control over it. That was a risk that the country took when it decided to sell it.

You may remember, I got badgered in the press a year ago August because I said there was some question about the security of AWACS if we sold it. I was the bad guy around town then. But the decision was made when the F-14s were sold that the risk was acceptable. It turned out to be a bad risk. It would turn out to be a bad choice, in that sense. Although we don't think the equipment has been compromised yet. But who knows where Iran's going to go in the next six months or a year.

So, while there were thoughts and plans within our government as to what we might do to mitigate that damage, if the country really crumbled, there was, honestly, no way to avoid a compromise there. In short, even if you flew all the airplanes out or blew them up, all those manuals, all those technical support equipment and stuff was there. I mean you just would have to have done a very thorough job to prevent a substantial compromise from there if the Soviets, the Communists ever really get access to those bases.

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Q: You've discussed the change in the intelligence community. What changes do you see in the foreign counterintelligence programs of the FBI and in working with the community?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I should have stopped before this last one, shouldn't I?

[Laughter]

ADMIRAL TURNER: I'm not sure I have any major changes in mind. I just have a strong conviction that we must emphasize counterintelligence more, we must use all the man-years we've given you in the budget to counterintelligence. We must be sure there is a real exchange, a meaningful exchange of information between Defense, CIA, and FBI on counterintelligence. We just cannot afford to have major differences of opinion surfacing late in the game as to whether this fellow was bona fide or not, and so on. We may never come to the same agreement. That doesn't

bother me. But I want to be sure that we've both looked at all the same data and that Bill and I have been told that, you know, we've got a major difference here on this case. Fine. We can live with that. But we don't want rivalry and competition; we want teamwork here. So that if there's a Monday-Friday type difference again, why, it's aired and the different reasons for it are brought forward.

And I think we've made a lot of progress in that area. I think that with the advent of many more Chinese coming here, on top of the detente-inspired increase in Soviets, that it just takes much more alertness. I think that it takes cooperative ventures.

I've just sent to your Director a proposal to help on the Mexican-American border, where, as you know, there are problems. We're not able to cover it, you're not allowed to cover it. And we're going to work that out and try to see to it that there are no sort of turf or jurisdictional issues here that stand in the way of getting the job done.

And your Director is kind enough today to sponsor me for -- some of our counterintelligence leaders for lunch. and I asked him to come back in a month or so on my end. And I think both of us have really emphasized that we've got to stay in very close touch and be sure that nowhere in the working levels do rivalries develop, as opposed to teamwork. And through that, I'm sure that we're going to be able to continue to improve and strengthen the country.

It's very, very necessary, and it's necessary in even more than just the human counterintelligence. I've been very anxious to be sure that we look on counterintelligence in its totality.

You know, the fact that there are -- I think are zero secure telephones in automobiles in this city, and, you know, everybody's got one in Moscow, is just, you know, indicative of the fact we haven't paid attention to the full gamut of the problem. And we're trying very hard to do that.

[redacted] my counterintelligence coordinator for the community, has just published a counterintelligence summary report. But if you look at it, it emphasizes that there are counterintelligence problems not only with spies, with human agents, but with penetrations of a technical nature, acoustic signals and so on, that we've also got to attack.

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You know, and I assume that they have a whole network in the Soviet Union that keeps people posted when our different satellites are passing over, and telling them what their vulnerability is. We do some of that, but we don't do it as thoroughly.

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So, I'm just rambling in answering your question, but telling you from my heart that I think it's the increased emphasis and the teamwork between our agencies that's going to make the change in terms of just improved effectiveness.

Thank you again very much.

[Applause]